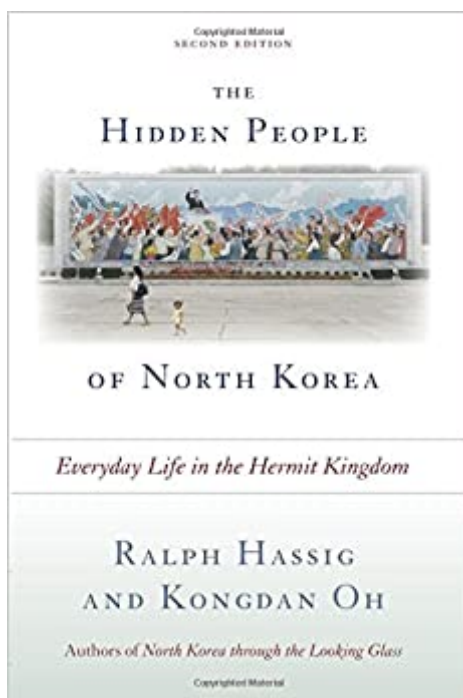


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The Hidden People Of North Korea: Everyday Life In The Hermit Kingdom



Synopsis

This unique book, now fully updated, provides a comprehensive overview of all aspects of life in North Korea today. Drawing on decades of experience, noted experts Ralph Hassig and Kongdan Oh explore a secretive, oppressed, and hungry world few outsiders can imagine.

Book Information

Paperback: 252 pages

Publisher: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers; 2 edition (April 16, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 144223718X

ISBN-13: 978-1442237186

Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 0.7 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

As extreme economic hardship has driven more North Koreans to the south, they are bringing with them an inside look at a very closed nation. In an updated edition of their 2009 book, Hassig and Oh look at the slowly fracturing secretiveness of the Hermit Kingdom. From the defectors come details of numerous individual efforts to quietly subvert the dictates of the Kim dynasty by illegally growing crops on patches of appropriated land or trading goods on black markets to survive. Since the late 1940s when Kim Il-sung took control, the country has been controlled by the Kim dynasty, demanding loyalty and obedience in the face of continued failure to provide for citizens despite overblown claims of collectivist harmony and abundance. In their highly secretive and regimented society, citizens are compelled to join mandatory groups that meet to discuss work or community issues and to criticize themselves for purported shortcomings in service to the government. This is a fascinating look at the very slow infiltration of outside influences despite efforts by the North Korean government to maintain isolation. (Booklist) Hassig and Oh give a panoramic view of this hermit nation. It is probably the most comprehensive work currently available because it covers almost every aspect of life in this isolated society. The authors provide rich data in their examination of the three-generation Kim regime to let readers understand its historical development, its tight political

control over its citizens, and its failures in agriculture, health care, other economic areas, and international relationships. More important, based on surveys and interviews with numerous northern defectors, the authors illustrate the lives of ordinary people in the north, such as how they cope with their daily lives under political control, how they doggedly try to survive during natural and economic hardships, and how they perceive the Kim regime and the outside world. Most important, the authors emphasize the change of people in the change of a regime. Continuous exposure to external information is the most important way for North Koreans to better understand their lives under dictatorship and broaden their perceptions of the outside world, which will eventually lead to fundamental changes in the nation. Summing Up: Highly recommended. All levels/libraries.

(CHOICE) This unique book, now fully updated, provides a comprehensive overview of all aspects of life in North Korea today. Drawing on decades of experience, noted experts Ralph Hassig and Kongdan Oh explore a world few outsiders can imagine. In vivid detail, the authors describe how the secretive and authoritarian government of Kim Jong-un shapes every aspect of its citizens' lives, how the command socialist economy has utterly failed, and how ordinary individuals struggle to survive through small-scale capitalism. Still a cypher, Kim Jong-un, as did his father before him, controls his people by keeping them isolated and banning most foreigners. North Koreans remain hungry and oppressed, yet the outside world is slowly filtering in, and the book concludes by urging the United States to flood North Korea with information so that its people can make decisions based on truth rather than their dictator's ubiquitous propaganda.

Ralph Hassig is an independent consultant and retired adjunct professor of psychology at the University of Maryland University College. Kongdan Oh is a research staff member at the Institute for Defense Analyses and a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

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